

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 17, 2019

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Wicker and Johnson, and Ranking Members Cantwell and Peters,

We write to request your support for securing Brand USA's funding mechanism, which expires soon. This important program enables significant economic input for our economy.

Travel and tourism are drivers of the American economy, fueling one in every nine American jobs. According to the U.S. Travel Association, traveler spending in the United States generated \$2.4 trillion in economic output in 2017 and supported 15.6 million jobs.

Brand USA is a public-private partnership that serves as the destination marketing organization for the United States. Created by the bipartisan Travel Promotion Act of 2009, Brand USA's mission is to encourage visitation to the United States and to grow America's share of the international travel market. Brand USA operates at no cost to the American taxpayer. It is funded through a fee on international visitors to the United States traveling under the Visa Waiver Program, and through voluntary private-sector contributions.

Since fiscal year 2013, Brand USA's marketing efforts have brought 5.4 million incremental international visitors to the United States. These international visitors spent \$17.7 billion, generating a total economic impact of \$38.4 billion and supporting an average of 51,580 jobs per year. In 2017 alone, Brand USA marketing brought an additional 1.16 million international visitors to the United States, generating an economic impact of \$8.5 billion.

Though the program has been a proven success in boosting tourism to the United States and driving economic growth, the 2018 congressional budget caps agreement diverted Brand USA's

user fees away from the program to general revenue. We strongly support protecting and renewing Brand USA's funding, while upholding the original structure that no taxpayer dollars should be used to fund the program.

The new Congress must unite around this bipartisan issue as it has done in the past, and reauthorize Brand USA. The program was reauthorized in 2014 with broad bipartisan support. Within the 115th Congress, 36 House Republicans and 34 House Democrats signed a similar letter to House leadership calling for a Brand USA funding fix. In addition, over 600 major entities, from tourism boards to corporations, representing all 50 states, have co-signed a letter making a similar request for Brand USA funding reauthorization. The future of the United States' international travel promotion and planning will be in jeopardy until the program is reauthorized.

Brand USA is a proven and cost-effective travel promotion program, and we encourage support for a legislative fix for Brand USA in the upcoming budget caps negotiations. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Roy Blunt
United States Senator



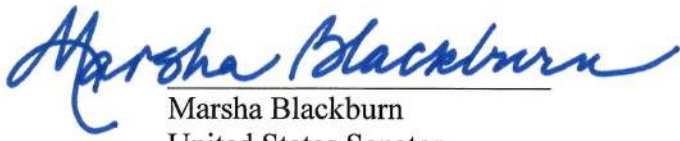
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



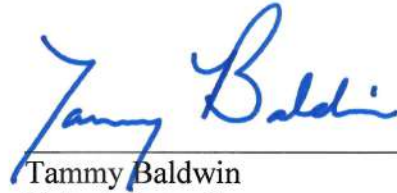
Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



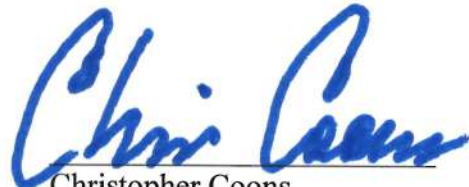
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Thomas Carper
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



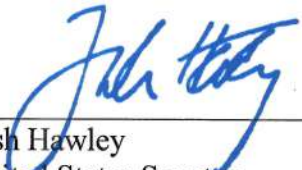
Christopher Coons
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Lindsey O. Graham
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Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator




Josh Hawley
United States Senator




Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



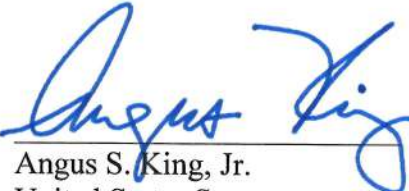
Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
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John Kennedy
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator




Martha McSally
United States Senator



Ed Markey
United States Senator



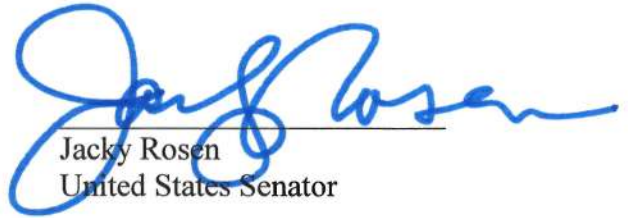
Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



David Perdue
United States Senator



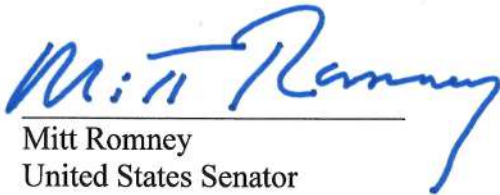
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



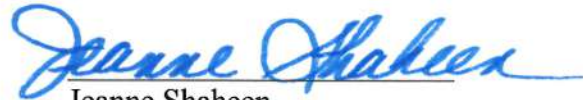
Pat Roberts
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



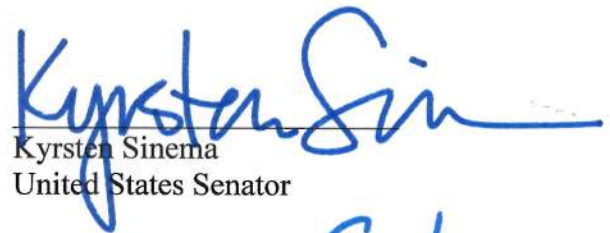
Mitt Romney
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



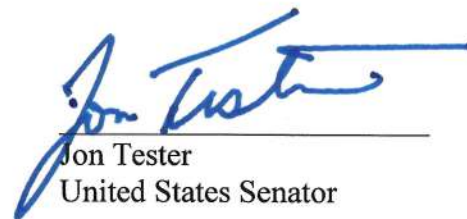
Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Tina Smith
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John Thune
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



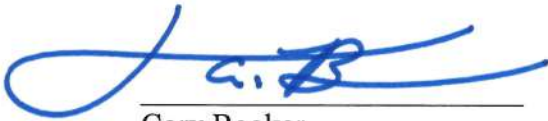
Tom Udall
United States Senator



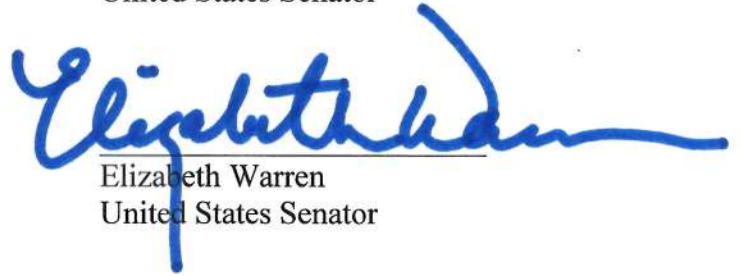
Todd Young
United States Senator



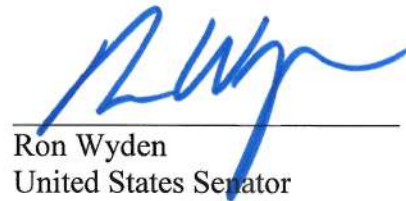
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Cory Booker
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator